

Parent and Child Body Dissatisfaction: The Roles of Implicit Behavior and Child Gender in Middle Childhood

Authors : Vivienne Langhorne, Helen Sharpe

Abstract : Body dissatisfaction begins developing in middle childhood, with wide-ranging implications for mental health and well-being. Previous research on parent behavior has focused on the role of explicit parent behaviors in adolescent and young adult body dissatisfaction, leaving a gap in understanding how implicit parent behaviors relate to body dissatisfaction in childhood. The current study investigated how implicit parent behavior (such as modeling own body dissatisfaction and dieting) relates to parent and child body dissatisfaction. It was hypothesized that implicit behavior would be directly related to parent and child body dissatisfaction and mediate the relationship between the two. Furthermore, this study aimed to examine child gender as a potential moderator in this mediation, as research shows that boys and girls experience body dissatisfaction differently. This study analyzed survey responses on parent body dissatisfaction, implicit behavior, and child body dissatisfaction measures from a sample of 166 parent-child dyads with children between the ages of 6 to 9 years old. Regression analyses revealed that parent body dissatisfaction is related to both parent-implicit behavior and child body dissatisfaction. However, implicit behavior did not mediate the relationship between the two body dissatisfaction variables. Additionally, the results of moderated mediation indicated there were no child gender differences in the strength of the association between parental implicit behaviors and child body dissatisfaction. These findings highlight the need for further research into the mechanisms behind parent and child body dissatisfaction to better understand the process through which intergenerational transmission occurs.

Keywords : body dissatisfaction, implicit behaviour, middle childhood, parenting

Conference Title : ICFED 2024 : International Conference on Feeding and Eating Disorders

Conference Location : Toronto, Canada

Conference Dates : July 18-19, 2024